DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 232 347 EC 152 627

AUTHOR	Norsen, Barbara G.; Wick, Christine
TITLE	[Individual Progress Program for the Extremely Gifted Student in the Greater Seattle Area].
PUB DATE	83
NOTE	10p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Barbara Norsen, Seattle Public Schools, 815 4th Ave., North, Seattle, WA 98109 ($2.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Acceleration (Education); Curriculum Development; Elementary Education; *Enrichment; *Gifted; Individualized Instruction; Junior High Schools; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS	Individual Progress Program

ABSTRACT

The Individual Progress Program (IPP) is an approach designed to serve extremely advanced gifted students (grades 1 through 9) in the Seattle area. IPP is intended to meet students' unmet educational needs by allowing them to progress at their own accelerated pace through a broadly based curriculum while also pursuing interest areas. The program features a two step identification procedure, flexibility in program placement, diagnostic testing and ongoing monitoring, and adaptation of the existing curricula around three specific themes (patterns, origins, and systems). Mathematics, language arts/reading, social studies, and science components are part of the IPP program. Enrichment activities include individual student projects. IPP also stresses students' social/emotional development and fosters parent/community involvement in the program. Evaluation data has revealed IPP students had significantly higher scores in reading comprehension, language mechanics, and math computation than did a control group of high achievers. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED232347

[Individual Progress Program for the Extremely Gifted Student in the Greater Seattle Area]

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Barbara Norsen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Barbara G. Norsen
Christine Wick

EC152627

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Individual Progress Program was designed to meet the academic needs of the extraordinarily academically and intellectually gifted students in the greater Seattle area. There is a widespread interest in providing full or part-time programming for gifted students at some age level and various districts offer a variety of options. However, none offers a program specifically designed for the extremely academically advanced, nor do they offer a fully articulated program for accelerated progress. The IPP is unique in its design.

The pilot project, which was begun in September, 1978, dealt with students in grades 1-5. The projected enrollment will encompass grades 1-12, with a curriculum design that will allow students to progress through the materials at an accelerated pace that matches their interests and abilities. The present model incorporates identification methods and procedures, curriculum format and scheduling, and an evaluation design.

HISTORY

The initial concept for a program of this nature was developed by Dr. Halbert Robinson from the University of Washington. A program had been developed by the University Child Development Research Group for gifted preschoolers. It soon became apparent that adequate public educational programs were not available for this population and it was proposed to the Seattle Public Schools that a model be developed. Seattle made a commitment to the concept and established a program at Madrona Elementary School with 55 students and 2 teachers in September, 1978.

Title IV-C funding was sought and received in late November, 1978. Since then, the program has expanded in numbers and grades with a present population of 250 in grades 1-9. The program received national validation in Spring 1982 and is now part of the National Diffusion Network.

A. Educational Need

It has been determined that children functioning two to four or more grade levels above their age—appropriate grade in one or more academic area(s) tend to be inappropriately placed in existing programs. Their unmet needs include: (1) appropriate match of instruction to their advanced achievement level and learning rate including possible post-secondary placement, (2) provisions for continuity and stability in educational programming, (3) association with other children of the same age who are also achieving at unusually advanced levels.

The Individual Progress Program (IPP) is presently meeting the educational needs of these extraordinarily academically/intellectually talented students in grades 1-9 in the greater Seattle area.

EC 152627

The Individual Progress Program will encompass several educational factors:

1. Each student's progress through the curriculum material will be determined by ability and performance, not chronological age.

2. Elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels of the program will be coordinated in a fully articulated system.

3. The program will rely, to the greatest possible extent, on matching students with existing educational resources rather then developing special curriculum materials for this group along.

B. Proposed Solution

The major function of the IPP is to provide a cost-effective educational model which will allow academically/intellectually advanced students to progress at their own accelerated pace through a broadly based core curriculum and at the same time pursue studies in areas of interest. The curriculum will reflect the District Scope and Sequence in each discipline and for each grade level.

II. MAJOR COMPONENTS

A. Student Identification

The identification process is a two step procedure. All applicants must be screened by the District Gifted Assessment Office. Assessment consists of the Cognitive Abilities Test - nonverbal battery, the Test of Creative Potential and the California Achievement Test. That office will then refer students who rank in the upper two percent by ethnic category of the academic and intellectual areas to the Individual Progress Program for additional screening, which consists of the Otis Lennon Test of Mental Abilities - verbal battery.

B. Configuration

There is a commitment to provide a fully articulated, continuous education at an accelerated pace for these students from 1-12. Students who are moving through the curriculum at an accelerated pace present unique problems in scheduling and program design. At the primary level it is possible to meet their academic needs by individualization in the classroom. Because they have been selected for extreme academic abilities, small groups of like-ability students do evolve. The intermediate grade levels incorporate departmentalized instruction and there is extensive movement by the students. This movement also allows for flexibility in placement to meet a student's academic needs - whether that be for reinforcement of a skill or acceleration.

Flexibility in the area of program placement becomes a crucial issue. One example of this is the fifth grade placement. In the IPP, the fifth grade has been established as the transition grade between the elementary and middle school setting. The placement for these students is determined through input from parents, staff and students. Those children

who show a strong academic need for accelerated learning, as well as social/emotional maturity are placed at the middle school.

Another example is the appropriate class level selection for upper grade students. As students progress through the middle school, the need for advanced course work may arise. Thus, small groups of students may travel to the high school for one to three different classes. The proximity of building site reduces the time students spend in transit and reduces or eliminates additional costs for transportation.

When students leave the middle school, the staff provides input for placement in all major content areas. A specific feeder pattern has been recommended so that the IPP students are directed to a high school site that can provide strong academic classrooms. The honors and advanced placement offerings are critical.

C. Diagnostic Testing And Ongoing Monitoring

At the beginning of each school year, all new students in the IPP are assessed for academic level in math and reading/language arts. A variety of instruments are used.

1. Primary

   a. Stanford Diagnostic Test for Mathematics

   b. Stanford Diagnostic Test for Reading

   c. Basal Reading Levels Assessment Test

   d. District and Teacher devised tests for mathematics (based on year-end core objectives)

   e. Prescriptive Reading Inventory for Reading Skills (PRI/RS)

2. Intermediate

   a. Stanford Diagnostic Test for Mathematics

   b. Stanford Diagnostic Test for Reading

   c. Seattle Public Schools - Diagnostic Skills Test in Language Arts

   d. Assessment Level - SRA Reading Lab II-C

   e. Seattle Mathematics Tests - developed for end-of-the-year competency

   f. Prescriptive Reading Inventory for Reading Skills (PRI/RS)

For a student to be placed at a specific level, 85% competency in skills commensurate with that level must be achieved.

In addition to the testing, the staff can refer to the spring test scores for the California Achievement Test (both on-level and two years above) and work previously completed. All of this information is recorded on a chart in the student's folder.

Each student in the program has a folder which contains initial entry data, initial placement testing, yearly California Achievement Test scores, annual performance on student learning objectives, basal texts completed and independent projects. This information is passed from teacher to teacher and is updated as needed.

D. Curriculum Model

The underlying goal in developing a curriculum model for the Individual Progress Program was to adapt already existing material, whenever possible, to meet the needs of students, rather than develop new curriculum. This is a cost-effective means of presenting material which generally increases the availability of resources. Students can then accelerate through the subjects at a pace that is comfortable for them.

Due to the uniqueness of the population, different modes of class structure and scheduling are available. The strong sense of task commitment and goal orientation from the students enhances the possibility of effective individualization. However, to help students achieve in this less rigid format, time management techniques are taught to all classes. The implementation varies with the grade level.

Underlying all of the curriculum units are the basic student learning objectives and district core objectives. An interdisciplinary approach is considered very important, as well as a commitment to the higher level thinking skills.

Theme Approach

The Individual Progress Program emphasizes a thematic approach to all curriculum. Three specific themes have been selected: Patterns, Origins, Systems. These serve as the backbone of the curriculum and are implemented on a three year rotational basis. All curriculum is "umbrellaed" under the theme, thus providing a cohesive, directional plan for the year.

The theme of Patterns allows the students to synthesize concepts of totality, rather than isolated facts. Students are encouraged to deal with abstract ideas. It is important for students to note that not everything conforms to a pattern and students are encouraged to evaluate ideas and relationships from that perspective.

Origins leads students back to a "point of beginning". Encouragement is given to establishing an nypothesis for the causes or sources of ideas and happenings. Special attention is given to the expansion of this concept away from a strictly historical perspective. Origins can imply originality as well.

The theme Systems takes the students to a level where they must analyze interdependence and interaction of our society and all its

elements. It evolves from the historical, the creative, and the basic structure of all things. Systems implies harmony and the interaction of many different paths.

MATHEMATICS

The mathematics program for the IPP is highly individualized. The diagnostic testings at the beginning of the year will determine a starting point and aid in uncovering any deficits. The students have the opportunity to move through the texts at their own pace and can challenge any area where they feel they already have skill mastery.

In addition to the text work, each classroom instructor provides total class enrichment. The focus is determined by the curriculum overview for the year and the level of depth and difficulty would be established by the grade and background of the student.

The teachers do, at times, draw together small groups of students who are working on similar concepts. This provides an opportunity for instruction and clarification.

Again, even though these students are working at an accelerated pace, mastery of the basic skills and understanding of the concepts is of primary importance to the staff.

LANGUAGE ARTS/READING

The Language Arts/Reading curriculum is based on the district scope and sequence, but is taught at an accelerated pace, thus allowing for enrichment of the key concepts. There is a strict commitment to proficiency and mastery while at the same time enabling a student to delve into subject areas with increased depth.

The students focus on communication skills, both oral and written. They may be asked to do independent projects which integrate the language arts and reading areas with social studies or science. Thus, the curriculum is interwoven showing that the skills that the student's learn can be applied to any area.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The social studies curriculum provides yet another avenue to teach and reinforce academic and intellectual skills stressed in all areas of the IPP curriculum. The study of how people once lived is a perfect setting to develop problem solving and creative thinking skills, research skills, and to attain insight into historical processes and facts.

The social studies curriculum really provides the structure for the enrichment focuses in the other major disciplines. The selected program theme

for the year permeates all areas, but the social studies design is the secondary framework.

The core objectives for grades 1-8 have been examined and skills which crossed all grade levels have been extracted as major focal points. These include: mapping skills, time lines, recording data and information, change, interdependency and comparisons.

Using these six common points, the social studies curriculum has been built on a three year rotation that encompassed the district scope and sequence for the regular program in grades 1-8. The first year concentrates on America, the second year on Ancient World Civilization and the third year on the Formation of the Modern World. This content focus still relates directly to the program theme for the year and each teacher incorporates curriculum that is relevant for their grade level. For example, the first grade teacher approaches these broad topics through family and neighborhood.

SCIENCE

In developing a science component for the Individual Progress Program, it has been necessary to recognize the developmental knowledge levels of the students, their operational levels of expectations dictated by the district scope and sequence. There are overlying objectives for the entire science curriculum. Students move from activities which assist with the development of logical conclusions, preliminary laboratory procedures and the practice of collecting and recording data to a more refined critical thinking process and more complex problem-solving skills. The older students are more comfortable with higher levels of concrete thinking and are entering into the process of formal thought.

The IPP science program is oriented toward the use of concrete materials and maximum student involvement with these materials. The most critical component of a science program for the gifted is the structure of activities rather than the specific topic offered.

III. ENRICHMENT

There is a quarterly enrichment focus in the basic skills areas of reading and mathematics which carries throughout the grade levels. Generally, one day a week is given to that focus, which might be geometry in math or myths in language arts.

Team teaching is sometimes employed to provide a broader range of enrichment experiences. For instance, at the elementary level each of four classes might rotate through each teacher's unit with one teacher providing a unit on art, history, another on the development of film, another in conversational foreign language, etc.

All children are expected to complete individual projects. These projects become progressively more independent as children get older. At the primary

level, focus is still within a content area such as middle ages for social studies or biography for language arts. Eventually, students choose a project based entirely on personal interest. Flexibility is encouraged in subject matter and format, but projects almost invariably include research, product and presentation (communication) components.

IV. AFFECTIVE EDUCATION

Social/emotional development is a specific emphasis in the program. As much as possible, affective activities are incorporated into the regular curriculum. For instance, at the primary level the social studies emphasis on family and neighborhood provides a natural format for activities centering on the development of self and interpersonal relations. The language arts curriculum also becomes a focal point for understanding emotional development and responses, both through literature appreciation and students' own products. At the middle school level, adolescent development and drug awareness are specifically incorporated into the science curriculum.

An experiential approach is emphasized including small group discussions and activities, role playing and relaxation exercises. In addition, children may be instructed in time management skills and impulse control techniques when necessary.

V. PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The involvement of parent(s) in the IPP have been encouraged and has proven very beneficial. In the IPP, parent(s) offer assistance in the classroom in the traditional role of tutor as well as serving on a parent advisory committee. This committee functions as an advocate for the gifted education in the district, heightens the awareness of all parents regarding political issues related to schools and the gifted, makes recommendations for curriculum and raises funds for building level use. Parents appreciate the opportunity to be involved in their children's education.

Parents also function as an excellent resource for community involvement in the program. Since the curriculum is oriented toward primary resources, this becomes an integral part of the classroom.

VI. EVALUATION

Because the focus of the IPP is acceleration, the effectiveness of the program has been evaluated through comparison with similar ability children on achievement measures. A control group was identified based on equivelent on-level achievement test scores and was matched with the IPP students by sex, ethnicity and grade. Both groups were tested in the spring of 1980 and 1981 on subtests from the California Achievement Test at two years above grade level.

Analysis of variance using a group times grade factional design revealed that the IPP students had significantly higher scores in all three areas tested of reading comprehension, language mechanics and math computation.

Relative standing of the IPP students with respect to the norming population for the test (two years older than IPP students) was also analyzed. This was done through a comparison of percentile ranks fall to spring, with the objective that students will maintain or increase their relative standing. A test of correlated samples revealed that students had significantly increased their position within the norming population.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The IPP was developed out of a perceived need to provide an appropriate education for extremely academically/intellectually advanced students. The model provides full time programming for students first through twelfth grades with an emphasis on acceleration through basic skills curriculum. Enrichment, affective education, independent and community extension activities are incorporated into this basic acceleration format. The program is baseline funded and has proven itself as an effective way to educate students.